

Case 1 Family Readiness Group President

The Commanding Officer called a meeting together of the Command Leadership Team to discuss an issue the Command Master Chief brought to him a week earlier. The Command Master Chief let the Commanding Officer know that there was an issue with the Family Readiness Group president, Mrs. Cook, who has held the position now for 6 months. She is the spouse of Chief Petty Officer Cook who is considered one of the best Chief Petty Officers in the Command, is very active in the Chief's Mess and is always looking out for his Sailors. Both he and his spouse are well liked and recognized by the crew and family members as approachable and willing to help out anyway they can. This is especially true of Mrs. Cook who has taken a keen interest in assisting newcomers to the command, particularly junior enlisted family members.

Although Mrs. Cook has the best of intentions, the CMC stated that Petty Officer Third Class Barry, one of the new crew members, let his Chief know that after coming home early one afternoon, his wife told him that Mrs. Cook (who also lives in housing several doors down) had dropped by unannounced to visit his wife. He says Mrs. Cook stayed for about an hour or so and apparently had been drinking earlier because his wife detected alcohol on her breath and Mrs. Cook was slurring her speech at times. He said his wife felt very uncomfortable because they have a newborn and she felt very tired and wanted to take a nap but didn't want to be rude to Mrs. Cook. He said he wouldn't have given it too much thought except that one of his wife's friends had told her that Mrs. Cook is known around the neighborhood as having a drinking problem and pays neighborhood families unexpected social visits after she has had a few.

After talking with some of the other Chiefs in the neighborhood, the CMC determined that Mrs. Cook is an influence on several of the junior enlisted spouses. Some of the spouses have started socializing and drinking with her, mainly out of loneliness more than anything else. The worst part is that recently one of the command's other Petty Officer spouses was charged with a DUI out in town and it is known that she would socialize with Mrs. Cook on frequent occasions. Additionally, Mrs. Cook has two grade school children that are largely unsupervised when they get home from school while she is sleeping it off.

The CMC has also heard from a few unmarried members in the command that their significant other is not made to feel welcomed at FRG meetings and social events. The CMC said he had tried to get as much information about these concerns before the start of the Family Readiness Group meeting next week. He realizes that some of the information regarding Mrs. Cook may be somewhat embellished by several of her neighbors and, not having attended an FRG gathering in quite some time, cannot speak personally to the inclusive atmosphere at meetings and social events. The command has an operational commitment that will have them away from home for the next two and one-half months.

- *How does this affect families, family readiness, command mission and Mrs. Cook's role as FRG president?*

Case 2 Exceptional Family Member Newborn

Seaman Wise and his newly married spouse are only 18 and just out of high school. Shortly after completing a training school and reporting to their first command, SN Wise's wife, Jennie gave birth to a boy who was born with severe medical problems. The extent of the medical issues involved has yet to be determined, but the medical staff indicated they involve extensive neurological impairment.

Both Seaman Wise and Jennie are understandably devastated. The doctors indicate that the child will be severely handicapped and require full time care for the rest of his life. The life expectancy for children in similar cases was limited and the child was not expected to survive more than 10 years.

Both Seaman Wise and Jennie have a number of very difficult decisions to make and they are not sure where to start. Both grew up in broken families with little or no means of support. They were looking forward to the possibilities that a career in the Navy offered. However, they now question if the Navy is right for them under the current circumstances. Jennie is worried that she will not be able to care for her child while her husband is deployed.

One of the Petty Officers at the command mentioned to Seaman Wise that "guys with Exceptional Family Member issues never made it in the Navy." He isn't sure if this was true or not. Making any decision right now seems impossible for this young couple.

- *What can be done to help the Wise family?*